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Gorbachev's Policies Toward Western Europe: A Balance Sheet

Executive Summary

Harry Gelman

October 1987

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PREFACE

The essay that follows represents key observations and conclusions drawn from a recently published RAND report (R-3588-AF) that reviews in detail the opposing considerations affecting Gorbachev's policies toward Western Europe. The report is the concluding study in a RAND project on "The Future of Soviet Policy toward Western Europe," undertaken for the National Security Strategies Program of Project AIR FORCE.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since Mikhail Gorbachev became General Secretary in March 1985, his strategy toward the West Europeans has exhibited three broad characteristics. First, despite all the changes he has made, much of Gorbachev's conduct toward the Western Alliance has shown strong continuity with long-established and central aspects of Soviet strategy. **Most fundamental has been his broad diplomatic and propaganda offensive against the political foundations of Western Europe's nuclear deterrent and the European connection with the United States signified by that deterrent.** Both Gorbachev's efforts to build domestic pressures against European governments and his conciliatory gestures toward those governments have been shaped to serve the purposes of this offensive. Gorbachev has thus used a multitude of expedients to continue, update, and improve pursuit of an aim that dates back to Stalin's day. *Keywords: → 1473 FLD 19*

Second, Gorbachev has made it clear that **he considers the campaign of threats and highly alarmist tactics used in Europe by his predecessors during the anti-Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) struggle of the early 1980s to have been mistaken** because it was based on overoptimistic assumptions about the extent of Soviet leverage, and therefore counterproductive to Soviet interests. He has substituted a general peace offensive considered more likely both to exploit fissures in the Alliance for their own sake and to bring indirect pressure to bear on the United States.

And finally, Gorbachev has shown **willingness to make certain important incremental retreats** from seemingly unchangeable Soviet negotiating positions inherited from the past. The most notable such retreats have occurred over the issue of intermediate- and short-range nuclear weapons. Here, the Gorbachev leadership has at last come to terms with the Soviet Union's defeat in its effort to block NATO's deployments, and now in effect seeks compensation for previously unthinkable military concessions in politically disruptive effects on the Western Alliance.

However, the value for Soviet net interests of the tradeoffs embodied in many of Gorbachev's changes has apparently remained controversial in the Soviet elite. Moreover, Gorbachev's advisers and colleagues must weigh a number of trends with sharply contrasting implications for Soviet interests.

Some tendencies in Europe have clearly served to encourage Soviet optimism and perseverance in pursuit of long-established goals in Europe. **The central core of these goals remains the gradual reduction of American presence and influence in Western Europe, provided that this happens under circumstances that do not promote the emergence of an effective substitute—a coherent West European offset to Soviet geopolitical weight in Europe.** Given the satisfaction of these requirements, the Soviets would hope to see the incremental establishment of a European international order in which Soviet political, security, and economic interests are given the paramount importance which the Soviet leaders continue to believe to be due to the Soviet Union as the only resident superpower and the dominant military power in Europe.

But although the Soviet Union over the years has made some progress in this direction, and in certain respects continues to do so, those goals are still a long way from achievement. Moreover, significant obstacles have grown in importance in recent years, causing a good deal of Soviet frustration and concern.

FAVORABLE FACTORS FOR GORBACHEV

The first trend on the positive side of the ledger, from the Soviet perspective, is the continued gradual narrowing of the popular base of support in Western Europe for a nuclear deterrent, and thus for reliance on the primary nuclear guarantor, the United States. This trend has been developing for many years, but has become a particularly serious political factor in the last decade. Coupled with it has been an erosion of the credibility attached to the U.S. nuclear guarantee in Western Europe.

Although the anti-INF campaign encouraged by the Soviet Union in the early 1980s proved incapable of preventing NATO's INF deployments, the protracted anti-INF struggle appears to have permanently consolidated substantial opposition in Western Europe to any nuclear deterrent. Although this sentiment does not yet appear to command sufficient political strength in any of the largest West European countries to elect governments, it has reinforced the isolation of much of the European left from the United States.

The second favorable trend for Gorbachev concerns the decay of consensus in West Germany. In the West German Social Democratic Party (SPD) the center of gravity in security policy appears to have continued to move to the left. No single coherent vision of West Germany's appropriate defense posture and relationship

with NATO has yet emerged from the party, but its dominant theme continues to be the explicit downgrading of nuclear deterrence, and implicitly, of deterrence generally, in favor of agreements with and assurances from the East.

The Soviet Union has attempted to encourage these attitudes and to promote them within the West German population through a variety of expedients: first, by displaying favor toward the SPD in propaganda and in personal contacts; second, by encouraging East Germany and Czechoslovakia to negotiate draft treaties with SPD representatives on the creation of nuclear-free and chemical-weapons-free zones in central Europe as an adjunct to Gorbachev's general antinuclear campaign; third, by making repeated efforts to revive the mass antinuclear "peace movement" of the early 1980s, which had declined after the INF deployments began, through agitation of the issues of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) and nuclear weapons testing; fourth, by frequently showing demonstrative displeasure toward the conservative-liberal ruling coalition; and finally, by resorting to concrete concessions on European nuclear issues.

On the whole, Soviet leaders do not appear to have abandoned the conviction that West Germany, despite its economic strength and its important role in the Atlantic Alliance, is also the Alliance's most vulnerable link. In this connection two long-term considerations continue to be particularly important.

One is the **tacit leverage the Soviet Union continues to derive from the fact of its domination of the eastern half of a divided Germany.** The universal determination of West German society to protect the relationship with East Germany inevitably reinforces the Federal Republic of Germany's (FRG) stake in a calm relationship with the USSR, and tension with the Soviet Union arising for any reason therefore tends to create a special discomfort for any West German government that is not encountered by most West European governments to the same degree. Although the Soviets have found that there are important practical limits on their ability to exploit the FRG's need for dealings with East Germany, this consideration does impose inhibitions on West German behavior.

Probably a more important factor is **the tacit leverage created by the special proximity of Soviet military might to the FRG.** Because West Germany is the country most immediately exposed to Soviet military power in Europe, Gorbachev's peace offensive has generated strong societal pressures on the Bonn government not to reject agreements with the USSR that seem likely to reduce some aspects of the military threat, regardless of the possibility of adverse consequences for the net military balance. Although these pressures are of

course strongest on the left, to some extent they affect the climate of West German opinion more generally, and help shape the political alternatives confronting the ruling coalition. Again, such pressures do not exist in other major West European states to the same degree, a fact which has threatened to drive a wedge between West Germany and certain of its European allies.

In sum, although the exaggerated hopes about West Germany which the Soviets harbored in the 1970s and early 1980s have been seriously disappointed, Soviet optimists can argue that from a long-term perspective, the Soviet position vis-à-vis the FRG has nevertheless been improved. The main opposition party—the main alternative government—has come to reject many of the assumptions on which the NATO Alliance has been constructed, leaving the future West German relationship with the Alliance and the United States vulnerable to historical accident. And although the left has for the time being been defeated, the antinuclear culture it has championed with Soviet encouragement threatens to diffuse further into the German body politic, constraining to some degree the response of conservative West German leaders to Soviet antinuclear initiatives.

The third favorable factor for Gorbachev involves the consequences of recent Soviet concessions. The most important single change Gorbachev has introduced into Soviet policy toward Western Europe has been his willingness to adapt Soviet negotiating strategy to the reality of Soviet defeat on the INF deployment issue, and his readiness to seek new ways to turn this defeat to Soviet advantage.

Although Gorbachev's acceptance of the INF zero-zero principle can be defended in Moscow on military grounds, many Soviet military leaders are likely to see his initiatives as offering military concessions that are not adequately recompensed. But Gorbachev is likely to have argued to his colleagues that this retreat should be considered an investment that will pay major long-term political dividends.

— First, whether or not an INF agreement actually materialized, Gorbachev's public acceptance of the zero-zero principle was expected to assist greatly his efforts to create a more conciliatory image with multiple audiences to enhance the Soviet "peace" campaign, helping to erode public perception of Soviet hostility and a Soviet military threat.

— Second, Gorbachev is likely to have contended to his colleagues, civilian and military, that the elimination of all intermediate-range missiles from Europe could reinforce the political leverage inherent in the Soviet Union's advantage in other aspects of the military matchup in Europe, notably in conventional forces.

— Third, Gorbachev probably believes that his retreat on INF will materially assist his campaign against NATO's nuclear deterrent by **increasing the vulnerability of Atlanticist West European leaders to domestic antinuclear pressures.** The effect of those pressures was immediately reflected in the discomfort evidenced by many West European leaders at the prospect of the total elimination of NATO's INF presence, as they were caught between public desire for massive reductions in nuclear weapons and their own anxieties about the implications for NATO's deterrent posture and for Europe's "coupling" to U.S. strategic force. Moreover, Gorbachev evidently believes, as do some in the West, that the removal of all European INF and short-range systems down to 500-km range could eventually lead to a negotiated erosion of NATO's other nuclear forces in Europe.

— Fourth, the new Gorbachev proposals were well calculated to **create major differences within the Bonn conservative-liberal coalition.** Gorbachev's acceptance of the zero-zero INF option in February 1987 almost immediately evoked conflict between Foreign Minister Genscher of the Free Democratic Party and some leading Christian Democrats. These differences were exacerbated when Gorbachev went on to propose, in addition, removal of short-range systems with ranges down to 500-km, and then further underlined when Gorbachev insisted that the settlement require the FRG to abandon Pershing IA short-range missiles in its possession. Each of these steps was resisted by some German Christian Democrats but supported by its liberal coalition partners. The Soviets have noted with satisfaction that public opinion trends in the FRG eventually helped compel the German conservatives to yield in each case.

— Finally, the Gorbachev leadership is likely to hope that the Soviet concession on INF, taken in conjunction with other aspects of the Soviet peace campaign, **may eventually help to introduce a wedge between France and a major portion of West German public opinion.** Because France thus far retains a broad national consensus on the legitimacy of nuclear deterrence whereas this consensus in other West European states has been dwindling, one effect of Gorbachev's February INF concession was to increase French concerns about becoming isolated on this issue in Western Europe.

As a fourth broadly favorable factor, the Gorbachev leadership appears to believe that recent trends have opened new opportunities for the Soviet Union to **exploit tensions within the Alliance over the issue of limiting conventional arms in Europe.** The link between the issue of the conventional balance and the question of what nuclear cuts in Europe should be acceptable to the Alliance was reinforced after Gorbachev's new nuclear proposals in early 1987 because

major nuclear reductions in Europe will heighten the importance of Soviet conventional force advantages. Unfortunately, **to the degree that pressure, driven by the nuclear issues, mounts in the West to try to secure major conventional reductions in Europe, latent divisions in the West are likely to come to the fore regarding what kind of reductions and what kind of a bargain with the USSR might be acceptable.**

Most fundamental is the underlying disagreement over how much asymmetry in reductions must be demanded of the Soviet Union to render any agreement acceptable. The Soviets undoubtedly were pleased at the long French-American disagreement over negotiating modalities, but their more far-reaching hope has probably been that any revised conventional arms negotiations process would eventually bring to the surface a more important substantive conflict of interest between France and those other forces in the Alliance most desirous of an agreement of some kind with the Soviet Union.

As a fifth factor, the Gorbachev leadership evidently expects the internal reform process in the Soviet Union to have an effect on Western public opinion helpful to Soviet interests in Western Europe. Gorbachev and his advisers apparently believe that internal liberalizing concessions, like the Soviet concessions on the zero-zero issue, constitute an investment that will gradually help to erode the negative and hostile image of the Soviet Union in both Western Europe and the United States. Gorbachev has attempted to use this partial domestic relaxation as a spur to his antinuclear "peace" campaign in the West, and thus to build domestic pressure on Western governments for concessions to Soviet negotiating proposals with asymmetrical security implications for East and West. By the summer of 1987, these Soviet internal changes indeed appeared to be making some impression on the Western audience.

A sixth favorable factor, in Soviet estimation, appears to be the gap between the attitudes of many Americans and many Europeans on Third World questions.

Both Soviet behavior in the Third World and America's behavior in response to its perception of that behavior have for many years become increasingly divisive factors in the Atlantic Alliance. Many Americans have been disturbed at what they have interpreted as European complacency regarding Soviet conduct outside Europe, and also at what they have seen as European recalcitrance in refusing to assume greater responsibility for defending access to Middle East oil supplies that are more important to Western Europe than to the United States. Many Europeans, on the other hand, and especially intellectuals on the left, have been affronted by the American response to the Soviet presence

in the Third World. And even conservatives sympathetic to American dilemmas in the Third World are nevertheless disturbed by the U.S. competition with the Soviet Union outside Europe because of the diversion of U.S. financial and military resources from Europe which that competition has entailed and could further entail. All these differences between the United States and many West Europeans over Third World issues have become most acute in the case of an American use or threatened use of force in the vicinity of the European continent.

A final encouraging consideration for Gorbachev is the widely advertised West European discontent with the periodic drastic changes in the political perspective of the American leadership produced by the long-term oscillation of the U.S. electorate. This is coupled with an equal discontent with the quality of the leadership produced by the U.S. political process in the long as well as the short term. Soviet propaganda of course echoes and seeks to amplify these complaints, which the Soviet Union alleges to be growing.

At the same time, Soviet hopes are encouraged by the growing fear of some European leaders that tidal forces in the American polity are now working to reduce and perhaps even to eliminate the U.S. military presence in Europe. Such fears are apparently stimulated by the frequent assertions of exasperation with European behavior heard from some Americans, by the public calls from some important U.S. political figures for a major reduction in the U.S. troop commitment, and by the pressures on that commitment believed to be latent in the U.S. budget deficit and the Graham-Rudman-Hollings deficit reduction constraints.

UNFAVORABLE CONSIDERATIONS

Despite the encouraging factors listed above, many in the Soviet elite evidently continue to see a frustrating gap between the promise of the future and the more immediate political realities. Although the dual Soviet campaign in Western Europe from "above" and "below" appears to have made some progress, there is evidence that the Soviet leaders see the results as inadequate. The issues posed by the Strategic Defense Initiative and the underground testing question have not offered the emotional potential for the mobilization of mass protest in Western Europe that was presented by the issue of INF deployment earlier in the decade. Gorbachev has also been somewhat hampered in exacerbating popular fears about nuclear weapons in Western Europe to the degree desired because the effort to conciliate most of the governments of America's allies—the so-called "offensive of smiles"—has not been deemed compatible with a full-scale revival of the war

scare tactics of the late Brezhnev-Andropov period. For officials in Moscow, a conclusive measure of the present limits on the strength of the antinuclear left in Western Europe has been its inability to displace conservative Atlanticist governments in the two major states where antinuclear sentiment is most strongly entrenched in the opposition—West Germany and Britain.

Gorbachev's efforts to court the conservative governments of the leading West European states and thereby to drive a wedge between them and the United States have meanwhile been hampered because Gorbachev's campaign to secure the denuclearization of Europe has been seen as a direct attack on the interests of those governments. The receptiveness of West European leaders to his general appeal for détente has not prevented West European governments from resisting his efforts to push or to entice them down the path of denuclearization. There is evidence that Gorbachev has been personally surprised at the intensity of this resistance.

Second, despite Gorbachev's initial hopes to use France, the broad trajectory of French policy has become less and less satisfactory to the Soviet Union. The Soviets seem well aware of the pattern of incremental improvements in French military cooperation with NATO during the Mitterrand presidency. The Soviets are unlikely to regard this phenomenon as trivial, particularly since it builds upon a sequence of smaller such steps previously taken by Presidents Pompidou and Giscard. From the long-term Soviet perspective, France has been gradually moving in the wrong direction in this matter for the past fifteen years, with some acceleration in recent years. This French historical shift may be in part an offsetting response to the erosion of the credibility of NATO's doctrine of "flexible response" and the American nuclear guarantee over the same period, and is probably therefore seen by the Soviets as one adverse consequence of an otherwise welcome trend in Europe. Meanwhile, since early in the same fifteen-year period, there has been a significant transformation and hardening of French public attitudes toward the Soviet Union, particularly in the intellectual elite.

The Soviets believe that the broad thrust of French policy in the 1980s has on the whole served to strengthen the centripetal forces in the Atlantic Alliance more than the centrifugal ones. The Soviets appear particularly concerned over the political effects of French dealings with West Germany, partly because French influence has sought, since the rise of the INF crisis, to counter those long-term neutralist tendencies in the FRG which the Soviet Union wishes to encourage, and partly because the evolving Franco-German security relationship,

despite its major limitations and ambiguities, itself reinforces existing French tendencies toward greater cooperation with NATO.

The Soviets are likely to see France today, despite its traditional position as the most favored Soviet interlocutor in Western Europe, as the most adamant opponent in Western Europe of the Soviet strategy regarding cuts in both regional nuclear and conventional forces. In both regards, the evolution of events over the next decade is likely to bring French and Soviet interests into more direct collision, raising dilemmas for the Soviet Union in its future posture toward France.

From the Soviet viewpoint, the anticipated modernization and multiplication of French strategic capabilities over the next decade will probably pose difficult political choices. Even in the absence of any INF agreement, the growing French and British strategic capabilities will inevitably become a more and more prominent facet of the regional nuclear scene. It will therefore become increasingly difficult for the USSR to continue to appeal to antinuclear sentiment in Europe in the 1990s without subjecting the French nuclear program to much more direct and serious attack than has yet been the case. Any such radical shift in the Soviet propaganda stance toward France would, however, entail a considerable political cost in view of the broad French consensus that supports the French nuclear program.

A third negative aspect of the European problem for Gorbachev is the recent growth of West European efforts to promote regional political and security cooperation. From the Soviet perspective, the most disturbing implication of this trend is that it appears to signify a strengthening of the strand in West European thinking that wishes to enhance security cooperation as a bulwark against Soviet geopolitical weight, as opposed to the strand that emphasizes the use of such cooperation to increase West European independence from the United States. The Soviets recognize that both elements continue to be well represented in European political discourse. But most Soviet observers appear to see recent events as tipping the balance in the wrong direction.

For Gorbachev, the unpleasant implications of the recent upsurge in talk by West European leaders about European security cooperation do not derive primarily from the scope of the concrete organizational results likely to emerge from this rhetoric. The Soviet Union has been given little reason, as yet, to anticipate that this trend will soon produce results likely to have an important effect on the military balance of power in Europe, although this is not beyond the realm of possibility in the long run. **The more immediate and important consequences for the Soviet Union of the "European security" tendency are political and psychological rather than military.**

They imply a drawing together of the political energy of the two West European nuclear powers, Britain and France, to try to promote resistance in Western Europe to Gorbachev's conception of a "common European home" in which a dwindling American presence would allow Soviet geopolitical weight gradually to predominate. Through the French tie to the FRG, this impulse is being transmitted to the Federal Republic, which remains the main battleground for Gorbachev's efforts.

A fourth factor on the negative side concerns the risks involved in Gorbachev's use of *glasnost* to try to impress the Western audience. Gorbachev and his Politburo colleagues are likely to be well aware from past historical experience of the potential dangers to internal stability that may be created by internal relaxation. Some of the past reluctance of Soviet leaders to relax repression of dissidents and police and antiemigration controls has stemmed from a fear that once begun, liberalizing concessions to regime critics would only stimulate demands from inside and outside the country for further concessions considered incompatible with the Leninist system and unacceptable to the ruling oligarchy. **If this happened, the regime would be faced with a choice of either appearing to retreat further and further under pressure, to the detriment of the party's authority, or of returning to harsh punitive measures, to the detriment of the regime's international position. These risks are important, and are likely to grow as time goes on.**

Fifth, a major problem raised by Gorbachev's peace offensive, about which he and his colleagues have shown considerable ambivalence, has been the question of how far the Soviet Union should desire to become economically involved with the West. A rapid growth in Soviet imports from Western Europe might have been expected by Moscow to increase the European stake in the expansion of rapprochement with the Soviet Union, conditioning attitudes on many political issues and augmenting incentives to conciliate Gorbachev in many negotiating arenas. But to date such growth has not occurred.

There have been objective economic reasons for this trend that have been widely recognized. Gorbachev's advent to power coincided with a radical decline in the world market price of the oil that is the USSR's most important hard currency earner, a problem exacerbated for Moscow by Soviet oil production difficulties and by a simultaneous decline in the value of the dollar, the unit in which receipts for Soviet oil exports are calculated.

But it is also clear that this is by no means the whole story. **Important forces in the Soviet elite have made it apparent that they simply do not wish to see a large increase in East-West trade in any case. A powerful segment of the Soviet elite has been publicly**

lobbying for sharp limits on Western industrial imports, on the ground that they tend to inhibit the development of Soviet indigenous technological capabilities. Because of disillusionment with past problems experienced in assimilation of Western technology and because of desire to avoid excessive dependence on the West, **this point of view has received a measure of support from Soviet leaders, including Gorbachev and Ligachev.** On the other hand, a contrary pull on Soviet policy toward increased economic involvement with the West has been evident in much that Gorbachev has done. He has applied for Soviet admission to GATT (the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), thus far unsuccessfully. He has launched an effort to establish direct relations between the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CEMA) and the European Economic Community (EEC), which is also proceeding slowly. He has taken steps to decentralize much of foreign trade responsibility away from the Ministry of Foreign Trade to various producing ministries and enterprises, and he has legitimized the principle of joint ventures, intended to entice foreign capitalist investment.

Present Soviet policy appears to be a tentative, constraining compromise, reflecting a cumulative shift in the center of gravity of elite opinion. While Western trade, investments, and technology transfer are still to be sought, Western imports are apparently to be confined within the presently reduced boundaries of Soviet hard currency earnings, as supplemented by some new borrowing. A further major expansion in borrowing is to be avoided. Schemes to increase Western investment without borrowing—such as the joint ventures—are permissible, but only if structured to serve rigorously defined Soviet interests, even if as a result there are few Western firms willing to accept the invitation. Western inputs are to be more efficiently rationed and prioritized, and a maximum effort is to be made to elicit more and higher-quality machinery shipments to the Soviet Union from Eastern Europe, to make up the difference. This policy framework is not necessarily rigid and final, and could change if the elite consensus shifts over time under the impact of adverse experience. **But in the meantime, the political benefits which the Soviet Union might have hoped to achieve through less inhibited growth of the economic relationship with Western Europe will necessarily have to be scaled back.**

A final consideration on the debit side of the Soviet political balance sheet in Europe, and arguably the most important, is the special vulnerability which Gorbachev's internal political relaxation and his peace offensive toward Western Europe together pose for the stability of Eastern Europe.

Over the years, the Soviet leaders have had repeated forceful reminders that both internal liberalization and excessive dealings with the West are likely to promote trouble for the stability of their position in Eastern Europe—and that, moreover, the two trouble-making factors are likely to be mutually reinforcing. This lesson learned from the East German, Hungarian, and Czechoslovak explosions of 1953, 1956, and 1968 was reinforced for the Soviet leadership by the Polish Solidarity crisis of the early 1980s, probably the most serious Soviet difficulty in Eastern Europe to date. This experience has evoked serious differences in the Soviet elite on policy toward the region in the era of *glasnost*. Soon after Gorbachev came to power, a party functionary published a strident warning in *Pravda* about the dangers that reform, liberalization, and exposure to Western influence could have for the Soviet position in Eastern Europe.

But as Gorbachev's campaign to force economic reform on a reluctant Soviet party apparat has grown in intensity, and as he has dramatically loosened the reins on public discussion to help him in this campaign, the resulting ferment within the Soviet Union has inevitably caused reverberations throughout Eastern Europe. Because Gorbachev evidently regards the stagnant Czechoslovak economy as a Brezhnev-era holdover in genuine need of reform, Soviet leaders face an especially difficult decision as to how far to go in encouraging change in Prague, and what attitude to take regarding conflicts in the Czechoslovak party leadership over this issue. In general, regardless of how the Soviet leaders decide to handle such difficult practical choices, Gorbachev's policies of internal "reconstruction" and "openness" and external détente will probably continue to be a disturbing influence in the empire. In particular, Gorbachev's decision to allow the issue of Stalin and his crimes to be raised again at home has a strong potential to evoke dangerous emotions elsewhere in the bloc.

CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS

The following generalizations emerge from the panorama surveyed in this report:

1. When all factors are considered, the trends that are unfavorable to Soviet interests in Western Europe today appear to this observer to outweigh—somewhat—those that are favorable. The margin is not great, however, and there are so many opposing and cross-cutting factors that the net balance is likely to remain ambiguous and uncertain in Moscow. Although the tone of much of Soviet comment suggests more concern than optimism, Soviet observers with differing

preconceptions are likely to continue to weigh the political balance differently.

2. Against this background, it seems clear that Gorbachev's INF concessions in 1987 have been helpful to the Soviet political position in Western Europe. They have given new life to Gorbachev's propaganda offensive against the coherence of the Atlantic Alliance, a campaign which until this year was lagging badly. Gorbachev's concessions have in particular opened up new possibilities for future efforts to use the arms control process to exacerbate strains within the ruling Bonn coalition and between West Germany and its allies. These possibilities for future Soviet political gains are still mostly conjectural, however; thus far, the rewards Gorbachev has obtained, while real enough, have not been large.

3. Soviet political conduct toward the Western Alliance under Gorbachev is likely to remain less predictable than it was in the past. While Gorbachev's general political strategy has remained fairly constant—centering on his broad offensive against nuclear deterrence—his tactical decisions have been extremely volatile. This has been partly due to a personal predilection toward rapid experimentation and empiricism in foreign policy, which contrasts dramatically with Soviet behavior under his predecessors. Notions and initiatives created in the elite surrounding Gorbachev have been thrust out upon the West in rapid profusion to test their effect, to be abandoned when proven unsuccessful and pursued when shown to promise results. This helter-skelter style has on occasion created confusion and lack of coordination in Soviet foreign policy.

4. Gorbachev's behavior has sometimes been rendered fluctuating and inconsistent because his activist style has on occasion outrun his ability to maintain consensus among his colleagues. Important differences of opinion appear to exist in the Soviet elite on many issues, and these differences sometimes have been exacerbated by Gorbachev's changes of course. The two most important areas of discord are likely to continue to be Soviet policy toward Eastern Europe and the extent of the Soviet concessions regarding military deployments that are justified by the political advantages those concessions are expected to gain for the Soviet Union in the West.

5. All of Gorbachev's political gains in Western Europe thus far have involved political as well as military tradeoffs, sometimes very serious ones. This perpetuates ambiguity and contention in Moscow as to the net profit and loss engendered by Gorbachev's policies. For example:

- Gorbachev's antinuclear campaign of mixed pressure and concessions, while appealing to the West European public sufficiently to force grudging acceptance of his INF offer by conservative West European governments, is seen by those Atlanticist governments as directly attacking their interests. This has evoked a counter-move by those governments to improve their security cooperation against the Soviet Union while preserving their tie to the United States. Although the practical military results of this trend remain at best problematical, it is seen in Moscow as clearly harmful to Soviet political interests.
- Gorbachev's antinuclear campaign, his efforts to promote West German neutralism, and his strategy regarding conventional force reductions all attack, in particular, the view of French national interests held by a broad French consensus, and are progressively undermining the traditional Soviet relationship with France as a bridgehead into Western Europe. All further Gorbachev efforts in these three realms are likely to be at the expense of exacerbation of his relations with France.
- The ability of Soviet economic policy toward Western Europe to assist Soviet political strategy remains hampered not only by limitations on hard currency earnings, but also by Gorbachev's insistence on avoiding excessive borrowing and limiting importation of Western goods to avoid "dependence" on the West.
- *Glasnost*, a return to deStalinization, and piecemeal liberalization of policy regarding dissidents and emigration are improving the Soviet image in the West and helping the Soviet peace campaign in Western Europe. But these measures are likely to become increasingly difficult for Gorbachev to control without jeopardizing their external advantages, and they contain serious latent dangers for the stability of the Soviet position in Eastern Europe.
- Finally, Gorbachev's campaign to promote détente with Western Europe and his desire to encourage reform in Eastern Europe are both at odds with his simultaneous effort to tie Eastern Europe closer to the Soviet Union at the expense of East European dealings with West Europe. This effort is manifested especially in Soviet demands that East Europe send to the Soviet Union higher quality products which East Europe needs to use itself or export to the West in order to escape economic stagnation.

6. In sum, there are many latent tensions and internal contradictions between different aspects of Gorbachev's European policy because

of different Soviet needs that are mutually incompatible. In the absence of an unexpected event requiring Gorbachev to shift course, however, he is likely to press ahead in the next few years with those lines of policy that have thus far proved most promising.

- This means, above all, a continued effort to promote the growth of neutralism in West Germany through the arms control process. Encouraged by the retreat over the INF issue enforced upon FRG conservatives by the attractiveness of the Soviet INF offer to the West German public and to West German liberals, Gorbachev is likely to seek other negotiating devices capable of eroding CDU popular support and driving wedges into the Bonn coalition and between Bonn and its allies. It is likely that if an INF treaty is signed, Gorbachev will advance further offers calculated to promote the cause of "creeping denuclearization" in West Germany and in Europe generally. This possibility is increased by West Germany's sense of special vulnerability to the Soviet very-short-range missile systems that will not be covered by the treaty. It is thus probable that future Soviet proposals will seek to exploit a perceived Alliance internal political difficulty on the subject of control of missile systems of less than 500-km range. Gorbachev may attempt to do this through new proposals covering these systems specifically, or, alternatively, by pressing efforts to tie the reduction of very-short-range nuclear systems to the issue of conventional arms reduction.
- Gorbachev may also hope to attack the stability of the French popular consensus regarding security policy, perhaps by exploiting differences between French conservatives and some French socialists. His chances here are more meager, however. If forced in the last analysis to choose between retaining good relations with France versus promoting European denuclearization and West German neutralism, he will probably choose the latter.
- Finally, the Soviet leadership probably now believes that the Western Alliance has major internal cleavages on the subject of conventional arms reductions which the Soviet Union can hope to exploit in negotiations. Because the prospect of removal of INF forces is driving the West to place a higher priority on conventional negotiations, Gorbachev may seek to force into the open Western divisions as to the extent of asymmetry in conventional reductions that must be demanded of the Soviet Union to render any agreement acceptable. A new Soviet

proposal that offered a somewhat greater asymmetry than heretofore might be calculated to appeal to some in the West, while remaining well short of reduction ratios believed by others to be essential to avoid a further degradation of the already adverse Alliance position in the force balance. Gorbachev is likely in this way to attempt, in particular, to drive a wedge between France and important sections of West German opinion.

All of these Soviet diplomatic lines of approach are, however, vulnerable because of the political risks to the Soviet Union involved in much of Gorbachev's European strategy. Most risky and unstable of all is the policy of liberalization in the Soviet Union, particularly in view of the effects it may have upon Eastern Europe. Given present trends, the possibility of a new explosion somewhere in Eastern Europe is likely to grow over the next decade, and should this occur, there could well be a major retrenchment in Soviet policies in Europe.

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